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TO: Liam Skinner, Interim Superintendent

FROM: Wendy Crocker-Roberge, Interim Chief Schools Officer

DATE: August 11, 2023

RE: *August Leadership Academy Report*

Since late spring, district leaders have been working in collaboration with Rachel Skerritt and other consultants from [Attuned Educational Partners](#) to craft a robust and well-aligned plan for a full year of focused professional learning for school and district leaders. A [slideshow presentation](#) is included for reference and is appended at the end of this memorandum.

During the upcoming academic year, school and district leaders will come together each month to engage in work focused on the District's Prioritization Plan, which centers on two key components:

1. Student engagement
2. Improving academic and social-emotional outcomes for all students, ensuring acceleration of these outcomes for our Hispanic/Latinx students

This work begins with August Leadership Academy, taking place August 15-17 at UMass Lowell's Coburn Hall with the continuation of our Research Practice Partnership with the University.

Objectives in service of the Leadership Academy goal:

1. School leaders will be able to articulate key areas of focus for the district, will internalize expectations for the school year, and will stay abreast of developments that impact their school communities
2. School leaders will be able to identify components of culturally responsive teaching and provide actionable feedback to teachers and staff to improve their practice
3. School leaders will be able to easily access central office team members for support, coaching,

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thought partnership, and/or technical assistance as needed

The Planning Committee surveyed leaders in June to solicit feedback about their needs for professional learning. In response to the survey and with alignment to the school QIPs and District's Prioritization Plan, the Planning Committee crafted a three-day agenda that includes opportunities for leaders to explore their own leadership practice, engage in thoughtful action planning with their school and department teams, deepen their learning about culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, receive key updates and time-sensitive information for a successful reopening, create Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) of school and district leader teams for the upcoming year, and be inspired by keynote speakers with deep ties to our school district and the Lowell community.

An overview of each day's session is included below.

Day 1 Sessions- August 15, 2023

1. State of the District, *presented by Interim Superintendent Liam Skinner*
2. Instructional Findings & Trends from 2022-2023, *presented by CAO Robin Desmond*
3. Portrait of a Graduate, *presented by CEEO Latifah Phillips*
4. Legal Updates, *presented by Staff Counsel Jane Mosher-Canty and Mike Ortiz*
5. School Reopening and PLC Introduction, *presented by Wendy Crocker-Roberge*
6. Finance and Personnel Updates, *presented by CFO Billie Jo Turner and COO Dr. James Hall*

Day 2 Sessions- August 16, 2023

1. Keynote Speaker: *Lorena Escoto German, author of Textured Teaching*
2. Curriculum Sessions 1
 - a. Early Literacy Screening, *presented by Melissa Newell & Allison Straker*
 - b. Illustrative Math, *presented by Jeff Gwiazda & Rachel Slipp*
 - c. High School Session, *presented by Michael Fiato*
3. iReady K-12, *presented by Curriculum Associates*
4. Inquiry Best Practices K-12, *presented by Laura Schofield*
5. Curriculum Sessions 2
 - a. Open Sci Ed 6-8, *presented by Laura Schofield*
 - b. Eureka Squared K-5, *presented by Jeff Gwiazda & Rachel Slipp*
 - c. High School Session, *presented by Michael Fiato*
6. Coaching K-12, *presented by Curriculum Department Team*

Day 3 Sessions- August 17, 2023

1. Sense of Belonging & Culturally-Responsive Look-Fors, *presented by Fatima deSousa & Aimee Sousa*
2. The New MA IEP, *presented by Dr. Francisco Vicente, Director of Special Education*

3. District Prioritization Plan, *presented by Interim Superintendent Liam Skinner*
4. PLC Meetings & Text Selection, *presented by Wendy Crocker-Roberge*
5. Closing Keynote Speaker: *Maria Ayba of Latinx Community Center for Empowerment*

Following the conclusion of August Leadership Academy, we will continue our monthly Leadership Academy series with principals and selected district leaders on one day (Cohort A), followed by assistant principals and selected district leaders on the following day (Cohort B). A scope and sequence of the aligned learning topics has been developed for the year, along with sessions built into the calendar for our PLC groups to conduct collegial school visits and have opportunities to review their action plans and data to inform next steps. The plans align with both the District Prioritization Plan and individual school Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs).

Further descriptors of Leadership Academy can be found in the [Appendix](#).